

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to the Arthur G. Dozier School for
 3 Boys; providing for the internment of remains exhumed
 4 from the school; requiring the Department of Financial
 5 Services to administer reinternments; creating s.
 6 265.007, F.S.; creating the Arthur G. Dozier School
 7 for Boys memorial; requiring the Department of
 8 Management Services to administer the memorials;
 9 providing for the naming of the Forensic Training
 10 Center; providing appropriations; providing an
 11 effective date.

12
 13 WHEREAS, the Florida State Reform School, also known as the
 14 Florida Industrial School for Boys, the Florida School for Boys,
 15 and, lastly, as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys ("Dozier
 16 School"), was opened by the State of Florida in 1900 in
 17 Marianna, Florida, to house children who had committed minor
 18 criminal offenses such as incorrigibility, truancy, and smoking,
 19 as well as more serious offenses such as theft and murder, and

20 WHEREAS, throughout Dozier School's history, reports of
 21 abuse, suspicious deaths, and threats of closure plagued the
 22 school, and

23 WHEREAS, a forensic investigation funded by the Florida
 24 Legislature and conducted from 2013 to 2016 by the University of
 25 South Florida found incomplete records regarding deaths and

26 | burials that occurred at Dozier School between 1900 and 1960,
 27 | and that families were often notified after the child was buried
 28 | or denied access to their remains at the time of burial, and

29 | WHEREAS, on November 18, 1914, a fire consumed a school
 30 | dormitory where children and school employees perished, some of
 31 | whom died after returning to the burning building to look for
 32 | each other and assist with the rescue,

33 | WHEREAS, the excavations conducted as part of the forensic
 34 | investigation yielded 55 burial sites, 24 more sites than
 35 | reported in official records, and

36 | WHEREAS, given the lack of documentation and
 37 | contradictions in the historical record, questions persist
 38 | regarding the identity of persons buried at Dozier School and
 39 | the circumstances surrounding their deaths, and

40 | WHEREAS, Dozier School closed in 2011 after investigations
 41 | by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Civil
 42 | Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice; and

43 | WHEREAS, in 2016, the Florida Legislature created the
 44 | Dozier Task Force, which recommended that the remains of the
 45 | 1914 dormitory fire victims should be reinterred at Boot Hill
 46 | Cemetery on Dozier School property; that unidentified or
 47 | unclaimed remains should be reinterred in Tallahassee, Florida,
 48 | with the location to be determined by the Florida Legislature;
 49 | and that two memorials should be established, one in Jackson
 50 | County and one in Tallahassee, dedicated to the memories of the

51 boys who lived and died at Dozier School, including the 1914
 52 dormitory fire victims, and

53 WHEREAS Thomas Varnadoe was 13 years old when he died on
 54 October 26, 1934, only 34 days after being admitted to the
 55 Florida School for Boys, and whose remains were identified in
 56 2014 by the forensic anthropologists and archeologists from the
 57 University of South Florida after being exhumed from an unmarked
 58 grave on school grounds; NOW THEREFORE,

59

60 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

61 Section 1. Notwithstanding s. 406.50, F.S., this act
 62 governs the disposition of unclaimed or unidentified remains
 63 that were exhumed from the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys in
 64 Marianna, Florida, during the forensic investigation.

65 Section 2. (1) For purposes of this section, the Division
 66 of Funeral, Cemetery and Consumer Services of the Department of
 67 Financial Services shall be considered a legally authorized
 68 person pursuant to s. 406.49(6), F.S., and s. 497.005(43), F.S.,
 69 to care for remains exhumed from the Arthur G. Dozier School for
 70 Boys in Jackson County, Florida.

71 (2) (a) In order to care for the unclaimed remains of
 72 victims of the 1914 dormitory fire in a respectful and dignified
 73 manner, the Division, pursuant to chapter 287, F.S., shall
 74 select a removal service, licensed pursuant to chapter 497,
 75 F.S., to transport the unclaimed remains of victims of the 1914

76 dormitory fire from Tampa, Florida, to a funeral establishment
 77 in Jackson County, Florida, for preparation for reinterment.

78 (b) The Division, pursuant to chapter 287, F.S., shall
 79 select a funeral establishment in Jackson County, Florida,
 80 licensed pursuant to chapter 497, F.S., to prepare the unclaimed
 81 remains of victims of the 1914 dormitory fire for burial.

82 (c) The Division shall ensure that the unclaimed remains
 83 of victims of the 1914 dormitory fire are reinterred at the Boot
 84 Hill Cemetery located at the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys in
 85 Jackson County, Florida.

86 (d) The Division, after consulting with the Division of
 87 Historical Resources of the Department of State and the
 88 University of South Florida, shall select and cause to be
 89 installed an appropriate and respectful marking of each burial.

90 (3) (a) In order to care for all remaining unclaimed or
 91 unidentified remains in a respectful and dignified manner, the
 92 Division, pursuant to chapter 287, F.S., shall select a removal
 93 service, licensed pursuant to chapter 497, F.S., to transport
 94 all remaining and unidentified remains from Tampa, Florida, to a
 95 funeral establishment in Leon County, Florida, for preparation
 96 for reinterment.

97 (b) The Division, pursuant to chapter 287, F.S., shall
 98 select a funeral establishment in Leon County, licensed pursuant
 99 to chapter 497, F.S., to prepare all remaining unclaimed and
 100 unidentified remains for burial.

101 (c) The Division, pursuant to chapter 287, F.S., shall
 102 select a cemetery in Leon County, Florida, licensed pursuant to
 103 chapter 497, F.S., at which all remaining unclaimed and
 104 unidentified remains shall be buried.

105 (d) The Division, after consulting with the Division of
 106 Historical Resources of the Department of State and the
 107 University of South Florida, shall select and cause to be
 108 installed an appropriate and respectful marking of each burial.

109 (4) If at any time after burial by the licensed cemetery,
 110 a legally authorized person as defined in s. 497.005(43), F.S.,
 111 lawfully claims remains, the Division shall direct the process
 112 of exhuming the remains in preparation for transport and
 113 reinterment at the legally authorized person's direction.

114 Section 3. Section 265.007, Florida Statutes, is created
 115 to read:

116 265.007 Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys Memorial

117 (1) It is the intent of the Legislature to memorialize the
 118 boys who lived and died at the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys,
 119 including the 1914 dormitory fire victims.

120 (2) There is established the Arthur G. Dozier School for
 121 Boys Memorial in two locations: one in Tallahassee, Florida, and
 122 the other in Jackson County, Florida.

123 (3) The memorials are administered by the Department of
 124 Management Services.

125 (4) (a) The Department of Management Services shall

126 designate an appropriate public area for the Arthur G. Dozier
 127 School for Boys Memorial in Tallahassee, Florida, on the
 128 premises of the Capitol Complex, as defined in s. 281.01, not
 129 including the State Capital Circle Office Complex. The
 130 department shall consider recommendations of the Florida
 131 Historical Commission as required pursuant to ss. 265.111 and
 132 267.0612(9), coordinate with the Division of Historical
 133 Resources of the Department of State regarding the design and
 134 placement of the memorial, and consider recommendations of
 135 former students of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys
 136 regarding the design of the memorial.

137 (b) The Department of Management Services, in consultation
 138 with the Division of State Lands of the Department of
 139 Environmental Protection and the Jackson County Administrator,
 140 shall designate an appropriate public area for the Arthur G.
 141 Dozier School for Boys Memorial in Jackson County, Florida. The
 142 department shall coordinate with the Division of Historical
 143 Resources of the Department of State regarding the design and
 144 placement of the memorial, and consider recommendations of
 145 former students of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys
 146 regarding the design of the memorial.

147 Section 4. The Forensic Training Center (HB 3577) in
 148 Specific Appropriation 1234 of PCB APC 17-01, General
 149 Appropriations Act, is hereby named the Thomas Varnadoe Forensic
 150 Center for Education and Research.

151 Section 5. (1) For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the sum of
 152 \$700,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General
 153 Revenue Fund to the Department of Financial Services for the
 154 purpose of implementing Section 2 of this act. Funds remaining
 155 unexpended or unencumbered from this appropriation as of July 1,
 156 2018, shall revert and be reappropriated for the same purpose in
 157 the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

158 (2) For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the sum of \$500,000 in
 159 nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund
 160 to the Department of Management Services for the purpose of
 161 implementing Section 3 of this act. Funds remaining unexpended
 162 or unencumbered from this appropriation as of July 1, 2018,
 163 shall revert and be reappropriated for the same purpose in the
 164 2018-2019 fiscal year.

165 Section 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming law.